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Atari Online News, Etc.
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Dana P. Jacobson, Publisher/Managing Editor
Joseph Mirando, Managing Editor
Rob Mahlert, Associate Editor

Atari Online News, Etc. Staff

Dana P. Jacobson -- Editor
Joe Mirando -- "People Are Talking"
Michael Burkley -- "Unabashed Atariophile"
Albert Dayes -- "CC: Classic Chips"
Rob Mahlert -- Web site
Thomas J. Andrews -- "Keeper of the Flame"

With Contributions by:

Fred Horvat

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A-ONE #1137 09/11/09

~ Kid Chats Not Secure! ~ People Are Talking! ~ Firefox 4 in 2010!
~ Cyber Security Chief? ~ Al-Qaida Sites Down! ~ Dell Adamo Notebook!
~ Hong Kong Tops in Spam ~ Online Marketing Rules ~ Microsoft Is Spared!

~ Batman: Arkham Asylum! ~ A New Dreamcast Game! ~ PS3 Slim Beats Wii!

-* DOJ Checks MS, Bad for Yahoo *-
-* Steve Jobs: "I'm Vertical. I'm Back" *-
-* Carrier Pigeon Faster Than SA Broadband! *-

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->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
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It's been eight years to the day that four groups of terrorists took control of four U.S. passenger planes and flew them into various sites within American soil. It had to be the worst set of disasters to ever occur in the United States on the same day, if not ever.

I was surprised that I didn't see or hear much about this anniversary in the news today. Hopefully, this country is not getting complacent again, and we've forgot what it was like to come under such an attack! While I do not believe that we change most of our daily routines and keep looking over our shoulder, concerned about terrorists attacking this country somehow again, I believe that we should not forget the events of 9/11.

Until next time...

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Another week has come and gone and it looks like we might finally have a couple of message threads in the NewsGroup to use. We'll see.

But before we get to that, I want to talk a little politics. Yeah, I know, you were hoping that I'd forget or just plain stop, right? Sorry, but I think this is important.

Unless you're been the victim of a complete media blackout, you've probably heard about this congressman from South Carolina who yelled "You lie!" to the president during his speech this past week.

Regardless of which side of the health care debate you're on, you've got to agree that this was not a nice thing to do. Obama is, after all, the President. And as Commander in Chief, he is the congressman's superior, since he's an officer in the National Guard.

Now, I can remember back to eight, or even four years ago when I'd listen to a speech by the former president. I would shake my head and debate just about every point he made. WMDs, Iraq having a hand in 9/11, yellowcake uranium, Katrina, intelligence reports, the economy, whatever.

But there are two major differences: I was not on national television calling the president a liar, and I was right on those points... there were no WMDs, Iraq was not involved in 9/11, Saddam had not made arrangements to buy yellowcake uranium, the response to Hurricane Katrina was a horrible mess, intelligence reports did warn of an impending attack, the economy was circling the bowl, etc.

Congressman Wilson, on the other hand, was dead wrong. The president did not lie about the issue of illegal immigrants being eligible for government-paid healthcare. It just... ain't... so.

"Where's the proof" you ask? Right here, go take a look:
http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/F?c111:1:./temp/~c1117ScPOP:e176188:

That's straight from the Library of Congress website. This is not something contrived by either 'side' in the debate. It's the real bill, as it stands now before Congress.

Since many of you will never bother to go look, and will continue to say "Yeah, that's what they say but...", I'll copy it here for you... the whole of House Resolution 3200 (America's Affordable Health Choices Act of 2009), Section 246. It is comprised of one sentence:

SEC. 246. NO FEDERAL PAYMENT FOR UNDOCUMENTED ALIENS.

> Nothing in this subtitle shall allow Federal payments for affordability credits on behalf of individuals who are not lawfully present in the United States.

There ya go. End of story. Sounds simple enough, don't it? These 'Affordability Credits' are how the government will pay for your health care if your income is less than 4 times the poverty line. Above that, you pay your own insurance... or your employer does... or your mommy or daddy does. So I guess an illegal alien could pay for his/her own health care insurance, but is that really a problem then? I'm tempted to say that insurance companies require a valid social security number to be enrolled, but I have nothing to back that up although I believe it to be the case.

The other point... the conservatives' "loophole" is that a hospital must, by law, provide health care to anyone in serious need regardless of their ability to pay. That's the law NOW, not a part of this legislation, and it's something we should keep. Statistically, illegal aliens make much less use of the health care system than the general population. And I don't know about you, but if I'm wheeled into an ER, I want the first thing the nurse reaches for to be my pulse, not my wallet.

By the way, if you want to check out the full text of the entire bill, this is the URL is:
http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c111:H.R.3200.IH:

I suppose what astounds me most is that, even though we've got access to information like never before, so few of us even consider going to check it out. I know people who used to walk to the local public library once every week to read. Not because they couldn't afford to buy their own

books, not because they needed help, not because they had a project to work on... just because. Several of them would simply pick a book or periodical at random and just begin reading. Some would pick a particular subject because it was something they didn't know anything about. Well, I just don't see many people doing that these days, even though we have more 'firepower at our disposal. This situation is a prime example. The text of the bill is right there on a honest 'ta gawd government website, and no one even bothers to look to see what the truth of the matter is.

Okay, I've said about all I have to say. For now. [grin]

Let's get to the news, hints, tips and info available from the UseNet.

## From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup

Fred Horvat asks about Atari emulators:

"I am interested in hearing about other folks experiences with the latest Atari ST Emulators for Windows and Mac machines. I have not been following this scene for the past couple of years though. I think I must have tried them all in one form or another over the past 16 years in commercial, demo, or freeware forms.

What I am after is an Atari Emulator that I can use the TCP/IP stack of the host Operating System (Windows or OS X) from within the Atari Emulator. Like I was able to do with my Mac 8500 running MagiCMac under Mac OS8.51. There I am able to use IConnect in MagiCMac to surf the Web with CAB. I no longer use this machine so I d like to do this with my current Mac or Windows machine. I want to try Highwire and other applications under emulation without having to setup my TT.

If anybody has been able do this please post your setup here with explicit instructions on your setup or how to do it."

Jo Even Skarstein tells Fred:

"I think Aranym with AFROS is your best (only?) choice. AFROS comes with networking already set up."

Derryck Croker adds:

"MagiCMacX (the OS X version of MagiCMac) does not have any ability to use the host computer's networking stack. There is a plug-in system available, but no-one has ever written one to add it AFAIK.

Maybe the PC version will let you do it, I don't know."

Ausl8 (sorry if I get it wrong... I'm taking it from google groups) asks about NVDI CPXs:

"Hi all for some reason I am unable to use my NVDI CPXs (they will not load into XCONTROL) and as I am unable to find my original NVDI 5 install discs I was hoping someone could supplying them for me."

Michael Eibl tells Ausl8:

"This should help: http://nvdi.de/Software.html"

Our friend Guillaume Tello tells us that he’s been a busy guy:

"I wrote a new page about the Atari Stacy (see at the bottom of this link): http://pagesperso-orange.fr/gtello/machin_e.htm"

Ronald Hall tells Guillaume:

"Thanks for the page Guillaume! I’ve had my STacy for a while now and I love it. I was stressed out the first time I took my STacy apart too. If Atari had tried, they could have actually made it hard. <LOL>

Most apps will run in monochrome mode (ST-High) and there are actually quite a few games, even some great ones that play on the STacy. Here is a list - I’m not sure that its even complete though:

ATARI ST MONO GAMES LIST

20,000 Leagues Under the Sea
8 Ball
Alpha Waves
Balance of Power
Balance of Power - The 1990 Edition
Ballyhoo
Battlezone
Beyond Zork - The Coconut of Quendor
Black Cauldron, The
Bob Winner
BorderZone
Borrowed Time
Brataccas
Bunny Bricks
Bureaucracy
Checkmate
Chess Champion 2175
Chess Player 2150
Colonel’s Bequest, The
Conquests of Camelot
Corruption
Crystal Castles
Crystal of Arborea
Cutthroats
Deadline
Deathstrike
Donald Ducks Playground
Electronic Pool
Enchanter
Esprit
Fish!
Flight Simulator II
Flight Simulator II - Europe
Flight Simulator II - Japan
Flight Simulator II - Lake Huron
Flight Simulator II - Washington

Flip Side
Gnome Ranger
Gnome Ranger 2 - Ingrid’s Back
Gold Rush!
Guild of Thieves, The
Hanks’ Quest - Victim of Society
Hellowoon - Das Geheimnis des Zauberstabs
Hero’s Quest
Hippo Backgammon
Hitchhikers Guide To The Galaxy
Hollywood Hijinx
Hoyle’s Book of Games - Volume 1
Hoyle’s Book of Games - Volume 2
Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade
Infidel
Ishar - Legend of the Fortress
Ishar II - Messengers of Doom
Ishar III - The Seven Gates Of Infinity
Jewels of Darkness
Jinxter
King’s Quest - Quest For the Throne
King’s Quest II - Romancing the Throne
King’s Quest III - To Heir is Human
King’s Quest IV - The Perils of Rosella
Knight Orc
Lancelot
Leather Goddess of Phobos
Leisure Suit Larry - The Land of the Lounge Lizards
Leisure Suit Larry 2 - Goes Looking for Love
Leisure Suite Larry 3 - Passionate Patti in Pursuit of the Pulsating
Pecto
Loom
Lurking Horror, The
Mac Pan
Magnetic Scrolls Collection, The
Manhunter - New York
Manhunter 2 - San Francisco
Maniac Mansion
Megaroids
Millipede
Mind Forever Voyaging, A
Missile Command (High res version)
Mission
Moonmist
Myth
Nord and Bert
Not a penny more, Not a penny less
Ogre
Oil Imperium
Ooze
Oxyd (high res version)
Oxyd 2 (high res version)
Pawn, The
Perfect Match
Perry Mason - The Case of the Mandarin Murder
Planetfall
Plundered Hearts
Police Quest - In Pursuit of the Death Angel
Police Quest II - The Vengeance
Psion Chess

Scapeghost
Seastalker
Secret of Monkey Island, The
Sherlock Holmes - The Riddle of the Crown Jewels.
Silicon Dreams
Sorcerer
Space Quest - The Sarien Encounter
Space Quest 2 - Vohauls' Revenge
Space Quest 3 - The Pirates of Pestulon
Spellbreaker
Spinger
Starcross
Starglider
Starglider 2
Stationfall
Stone Age
Suspect
Suspended
Tennis (high res version)
Tex McPhilip - Road to Divinity
Time and Magik
Tonight the Shrieking Corpses Bleed
Trinity
Ultima II - Revenge of the Enchantress
Ultima III - Exodus
Voodoo Girl Queen of the Darned
Wind Surf Willy
Wishbringer
Witness, The
Wonderland
Zak Mckraken and the Alien Mindbenders
Zak Mckraken and the Alien Mindbenders (demo)
Zork - The Undiscovered Underground
Zork I - The Great Underground Empire
Zork II - The Wizard of Frobozz
Zork III - The Dungeon Master

and of course, you can always plug an SC1224 in to play color games.
Hope that helps!"

Guillaume replies:

"Megaroids... I remember this one, really simple but great!

Millipede... Oh... I'll have to get it!

Sure [it does help], thanks a lot for the list. Are there some car race games in mono??"

Ronald replies:

"Now that, I'm really not sure about. Maybe someone else can answer?"

Someone (name withheld) asks about the ColdFire computer:

"Just wondering if anyone here, besides myself, has pre-ordered or plans to get the Atari Coldfire board."

Jim DeClercq replies:

"Me two, or three, or whatever. Thanks for the reminder. I think I need to send them some money. Have already promised to buy one"

Edward Baiz adds:

"Yes I have to pay them also, but I told them to let me know when. They said they would. I just saw a picture of the board and it looks great."

'AtariNut' adds his thoughts:

"Yeah.....I'll be buying one when....A) I have $800.00 USD to spare and B) When I see how it actually fits inside a tower case, and how well it runs existing Atari software.

Having said that, I am pretty excited about the project! I'm hoping it really ignites the Atari community!!"

Edward tells AtariNut:

"Hopefully we will not a repeat like the Hades060 with the first batch being sent out with problems. I hope Fredi learned his lesson and will strive to make it all right in the first shot."

Jo Even Skarstein adds:

"I haven't pre-ordered, but I definitely plan to buy one. I hope to make a laptop out of it."

Edward posts this, musing about the possible speed of the ColdFire board:

"That would be nice if the Coldfire could run FireFox. If so, I would use that as my browser instead of Highwire (good program, but needs Java support and the ability to do online buying/banking). Are we talking about a Mint version of Firefox or a Linux version? I have the latest version of Linux for the 68000 series on DVD. Had it working fine on the Hades060 before it went bye-bye."

Vincent Rivière tells Edward:

"The ColdFire MCF5474 processor (the one that will be on the ACP computer) runs at 266 MHz for ~400 MIPS."

Well folks, that's about it for this time around. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - PS3 Slim Sales Trounce Xbox 360, Wii 3-to-1!

"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""" 'Arkham Asylum' Is Batman at His Best!
New Dreamcast Game Coming!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
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## PS3 Slim Sales Trounce Xbox 360, Wii 3-to-1

Not one week into its UK sales debut, Sony's re-imagined, slim-sized PlayStation 3 is already enjoying massive sales, up nearly 1000 percent over the prior week. The UK and Denmark market-researcher Chart-Track, which reported that figure, told biz watcher MCV "the sales increase is very impressive," adding that the PS3 outsold the Xbox 360 as well as both the Wii and DS Lite by a striking three-to-one ratio.

Points of order: Sony's PS3 was only behind by a million units in Europe prior to the new model's debut, so the sales jump has the benefit of a presumably less standoffish customer base (compared to the US, where the unit sales gap is roughly nine times wider). There's also the question of who's buying the new units: Are they predominantly new customers, or substantial numbers of existing ones? The answer to the latter will be decisive in effecting the sustainability of the UK-based sales uplift. Then there's the "calm before the storm" factor. In Japan, sales of the PS3 were down dramatically in anticipation of the new model's launch on September 3rd. The "three-to-one" week-over-week unit sales leap in the UK probably owes something to a similar effect.

How do things look in the US? We'll need NPD Group's numbers to say for sure. Preliminary reports from controversial sales tracker VG Chartz suggest sales doubled last week, but VG Chartz's figures are notoriously dodgy and frequently "adjusted" without attribution after accredited trackers release their own.

## 'Arkham Asylum' Is Batman at His Best

The video-game industry has defeated more superheroes than Lex Luthor could ever dream of. Superman, Aquaman, Iron Man, X-Men: All rendered lifeless by forces more focused on making a buck than on delivering thrills.

So calling "Batman: Arkham Asylum" one of the best superhero games ever is kind of a backhanded compliment. Let’s just call it a great game, period. For DC Comics fans, it’s a must-buy, but it’s hugely entertaining even if you aren’t versed in the whole Batman mythology.

It begins with the Caped Crusader ushering the Joker back to Arkham Asylum, Gotham City’s home for the criminally insane. This time, however, the supervillain has set up a clever trap and quickly takes over the entire facility. Besides setting free hordes of violent lunatics, the Joker has an even deadlier endgame in mind - and only Batman can stop it.

Fans will relish the chance to take on familiar foes like Harley Quinn, Poison Ivy, Killer Croc and Scarecrow. Combat is easy to handle, and Batman can usually handle a dozen or so henchmen without breaking a sweat. But it’s more rewarding to take them out one by one, using Batman’s stealth skills to sneak up on them or swoop down from the rafters.

More intriguing is the opportunity to explore Arkham, the eeriest video-game setting since Rapture, the underwater city in "BioShock." The dank, decaying facility oozes menace and depravity, even when the all-seeing Joker isn’t taunting you over the public-address system.

Throughout the asylum, you discover tools from Batman’s utility belt: "batarangs," explosive gel, a grappling hook and other wonderful toys that open up new areas of Arkham and help you uncover its secrets.

"Arkham Asylum" developer Rocksteady Studios borrows freely from other games: puzzles from "The Legend of Zelda," stealth from "Metal Gear Solid," freaky nightmare sequences from "Eternal Darkness." But those are pretty good games to imitate, and this game blends its influences smoothly.

The mood reflects the darker tone of last year’s "The Dark Knight" movie, and younger Batfans may find the violence and dialogue disturbing. The smart script is by Paul Dini, a veteran of the noirish "Batman: The Animated Series," and that show’s two stars - Kevin Conroy as Batman and Mark Hamill as the Joker - deliver stellar voiceover work.

Demanding fans will be disappointed by the absence of some popular villains, and most of the major boss battles are lackluster. And it’s frustrating that Batman’s powers are sometimes unnaturally limited, forcing you to solve problems the way the programmers want you to do.

But it’s a fascinating journey, combining a solid story with a lively mix of diverse gameplay styles. Rocksteady has, at long last, delivered a superhero game that’s really super.

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->A-ONE Gaming Online - Online Users Growl & Purr!
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# New Dreamcast Game Coming This October!

RushRushRallyRacing_DreamcastThe Dreamcast s 10-year anniversary just got a little more exciting. Redspotgames, a publisher that thankfully didn t get the memo about the system s demise, has just announced a new game for the Sega Dreamcast.

That s right; Rush Rush Rally Racing will be hitting Amazon and eBay s virtual store shelves this October for the low price of $22. I can t believe I m actually typing these words in 2009, but you can pre-order this Dreamcast game now via the publisher s website.

Rush Rush Rally Racing is an old-school, 2D, top-down, arcade-racing game for up to four players. The trailer, which you can watch after the jump, boasts "No realistic backgrounds. No sponsored cars. Only fun, retro gameplay." Who knows if RRRR will be any good or not, but the gameplay in the trailer does look pretty darn entertaining.

Here s a list of features direct from the developer (their words, not ours!) if you re dying to know more about the game:

- Single-player grand prix mode with four difficulty levels

- Three multiplayer modes to enjoy with up to four players

- Five race cars to choose from

- 10 Grand Prix race tracks

- 9 additional multiplayer race tracks

- Awesome soundtrack by Black Device

- Autosave to VMU (any port, file uses just 2 blocks)

- Region-free

- Rumble pack support

- Compatible with original Dreamcast pads, arcade stick, and third-party controllers

- Supports PAL (50/60 Hz), NTSC, and VGA displays

- Configurable controls and many other options

- Animated cut scenes

- Plus even more unlockable content!

- New: Online high score!

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The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

## Obama Near Choosing Cyber Security Chief

A cyber security coordinator is expected to be announced by President Barack Obama in the next week or two, and the lead candidate is Frank Kramer, who was an assistant Defense secretary under President Bill Clinton, a source said on Wednesday.

The source, who has direct knowledge of the matter, asked not to be named because of its sensitive nature.

U.S. chief technology officer Aneesh Chopra told reporters at a technology conference on Wednesday that he had interviewed candidates for the position, and that a coordinator would be named in the not too distant future.

Chopra said Chris Painter, a former FBI cyber security specialist, was acting coordinator.

Melissa Hathaway, who led a 60-day White House review of cyber policies, resigned in August. A holdover from the Bush administration, Hathaway has said she withdrew her application for the position out of frustration over the administration’s delays in filling the post.

Obama had promised in May that he would personally decide who would become cyber security coordinator to lead the fight against cyber crime.

Holes in U.S. cyber security have allowed thefts of identities, money, intellectual property and corporate secrets, as well as sensitive military information and penetration of the U.S. electrical grid.

The Pentagon is considering creating a command dedicated to cyberspace, under the auspices of U.S. Strategic Command.

## Web-Monitoring Software Gathers Data on Kid Chats

Parents who install a leading brand of software to monitor their kids’ online activities may be unwittingly allowing the company to read their children’s chat messages - and sell the marketing data gathered.

Software sold under the Sentry and FamilySafe brands can read private chats conducted through Yahoo, MSN, AOL and other services, and send back data on what kids are saying about such things as movies, music or video games. The information is then offered to businesses seeking ways to tailor their marketing messages to kids.

"This scares me more than anything I have seen using monitoring technology," said Parry Aftab, a child-safety advocate. "You don’t put children’s personal information at risk."

The company that sells the software insists it is not putting kids’ information at risk, since the program does not record children’s names

or addresses. But the software knows how old they are because parents customize its features to be more or less permissive, depending on age.

Five other makers of parental-control software contacted by The Associated Press, including McAfee Inc. and Symantec Corp., said they do not sell chat data to advertisers.

One competitor, CyberPatrol LLC, said it would never consider such an arrangement. "That’s pretty much confidential information," said Barbara Rose, the company’s vice president of marketing. "As a parent, I would have a problem with them targeting youngsters."

The software brands in question are developed by EchoMetrix Inc., a company based in Syosset, N.Y.

In June, EchoMetrix unveiled a separate data-mining service called Pulse that taps into the data gathered by Sentry software to give businesses a glimpse of youth chatter online. While other services read publicly available teen chatter, Pulse also can read private chats. It gathers information from instant messages, blogs, social networking sites, forums and chat rooms.

EchoMetrix CEO Jeff Greene said the company complies with U.S. privacy laws and does not collect any identifiable information.

"We never know the name of the kid - it’s bobby37 on the house computer," Greene said.

What Pulse will reveal is how "bobby37" and other teens feel about upcoming movies, computer games or clothing trends. Such information can help advertisers craft their marketing messages as buzz builds about a product.

Days before "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince" opened in theaters on July 15, teen chatter about the movie spiked across the Internet with largely positive reactions.

"Cool" popped up as one of the most heavily used words in teen chats, blogs, forums and on Twitter. The upbeat comments gathered by Pulse foreshadowed a strong opening for the Warner Bros. film.

Parents who don’t want the company to share their child’s information to businesses can check a box to opt out.

But that option can be found only by visiting the company’s Web site, accessible through a control panel that appears after the program has been installed. It was not in the agreement contained in the Sentry Total Home Protection program The Associated Press downloaded and installed Friday.

According to the agreement, the software passes along data to "trusted partners." Confidentiality agreements prohibit those clients from sharing the information with others.

In recognition of federal privacy laws that restrict the collection of data on kids under 13, the agreement states that the company has "a parent’s permission to share the information if the user is a child under age 13."

Tech site CNet ranks the EchoMetrix software as one of the three best

for parental control. Sales figures were not available.

The Sentry and FamilySafe brands include parental-control software such as Sentry Total Family Protection, Sentry Basic, Sentry Lite and FamilySafe (SentryPC is made by a different company and has no ties with EchoMetrix).

The Lite version is free. Others range from $20 to download and $10 a year for monitoring, to about $48 a year, divided into monthly payments.

The same company also offers software under the brands of partner entities, such as AmberWatch Lookout.

AmberWatch Foundation, a child-protection nonprofit group that licenses its brand to EchoMetrix, said information gathered through the AmberWatch-branded software is not shared with advertisers.

Practically speaking, few people ever read the fine print before they click on a button to agree to the licensing agreement. "Unless it’s upfront in neon letters, parents don’t know," Aftab said.

EchoMetrix, formerly known as SearchHelp, said companies that have tested the chat data using Pulse include News Corp.’s Fox Broadcasting and Dreamworks SKG Inc. Viacom Inc.’s Paramount Pictures recently signed on.

None of those companies would comment when contacted by the AP.

EchoMetrix has been losing money. Its liabilities exceeded its assets by nearly $25 million as of June 30, according to a regulatory filing that said there is "substantial doubt about the company’s ability to continue as a going concern."

To get the marketing data, companies put in keywords, such as the name of a new product, and specify a date range, into Pulse. They get a "word cloud" display of the most commonly used words, as well as snippets of actual chats. Pulse can slice data by age groups, region and even the instant-messaging program used.

Pulse also tracked buzz for Microsoft Corp.’s "Natal," a forthcoming Xbox motion-sensor device that replaces the traditional button-based controller. Microsoft is not a client of Pulse, but EchoMetrix used "Natal" to illustrate how its data can benefit marketers.

Greene said children’s conversations about Natal were focused on its price and availability, which suggested that Microsoft should assure teens that there will be enough stock and that ordering ahead can lock in a price.

Competing data-mining companies such as J.D. Power Web Intelligence, a unit of quality ratings firm J.D. Power and Associates, also trolls the Internet for consumer chats. But Vice President Chase Parker said the company does not read any data that’s password-protected, such as the instant message sessions that EchoMetrix collects for advertisers.

Suresh Vittal, principal analyst at Forrester Research, said EchoMetrix might have to make its disclosures more apparent to parents.

"Are we in the safeguarding-the-children business or are we in the business of selling data to other people?" he said. If it’s the latter,

"it should all be done transparently and with the knowledge of the customer."

## Privacy Bill Would Set Rules for Online Marketing

Here is a look at some of the things that Rep. Rick Boucher, chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Communications, Technology and the Internet, hopes to put in a bill governing Internet advertising.

* Web sites that collect information about visitors - or use an outside company to do that - in order to target advertising on their own pages would be required to prominently disclose what information they gather. The Web sites would have to describe in detail how that information is used, how long it is retained and whether it is shared with third parties. The sites would be required to allow visitors to "opt out" of data collection altogether.

* Web sites that share user information with outside advertising networks, which place ads on sites all over the Internet, would be required to obtain user approval before collecting data. That is, consumers would have to "opt in." But these sites could qualify for an opt-out requirement by meeting certain conditions. For instance, a site could let users review, modify and delete profiles created about them. Or it could ensure that ads contain links to inform users what information is being collected and provide a chance to opt out of targeted pitches.

* Web sites that deal with sensitive personal information, such as medical and financial data, sexual orientation, Social Security numbers and other ID numbers, would be subject to the opt-in rule. So would sites that share consumer information with unaffiliated third parties for commercial purposes.

## Firefox 4.0 To Arrive Late 2010

Mozilla recently released a product roadmap with a number of new details on what the foundation is hoping to release between now and the end of 2010, including information on when to expect the next major iteration of Firefox.

The report details that Firefox 4.0 is due to arrive in either October or November of 2010 and will bring with it a range of new features, such as a new slick user interface and multi-touch gesture suppport.

But take note that this report is currently classed as a ’draft’ and could be open to any number of changes.

For those existing Firefox users, a plentiful number of changes can be expected prior to the late 2010 release date of 4.0, with both 3.6 and 3.7 lined up for debut before then. These new releases will offer such improvements and features as faster javascript handling, improved form completion tools, bookmark synchronization and pageload enhancements.

Mozilla also revealed that when Firefox 4.0 does hit, it will take a

leaf out of Google Chrome’s book, as each tab will function with it’s own separate process, reducing the instances of losing your precious browser session.

Firefox 4.0 will be with us in late 2010, so be sure to stick it in your diary! In the mean time why not take a look at our tips and tricks on how to get the most out of your current version of Firefox?

## Meet the Amazingly Thin Dell Adamo Notebook

Despite the tightening of belts all across the globe, computer manufacturers are obsessed with the concept of style, building ultra-thin, expensive machines fat with flair and aimed toward the budgets of the elite. The tease of Dell’s latest iteration of its Adamo laptop - which purports to be even thinner than Apple’s MacBook Air - is another pistol shot in an increasingly competitive race to build the sexiest, thinnest, heroin chic laptop out there. But the race feels hollow and nearly pointless.

Details on Dell’s anorexic Adamo are scant. The Web site says only that it is 0.4 inches thick, compared to the Air’s relatively bloated 0.75 inches. The Adamo’s screen measures 13 inches diagonally, and the laptop weighs 3 to 4 pounds, just like the Air.

Keep in mind that Dell insisted on calling the product a "design concept" and wasn’t clear if it actually plans on producing a laptop that thin. Still, what’s important is that the idea is there. Dell believes there is still a market for high-priced luxury laptops, and competitors will very likely trace Dell’s footsteps and build gaunt machines of their own.

Already Intel is introducing low-power processors designed for ultra-thin laptops. The Intel Pentium SU2700 is bred for use in sleek laptops that are as light as netbooks but have larger screens and greater functionality. Samsung released the $2300 X360-34P (catchy name, no?) that weighs only 2.8 pounds. MSI has its X-Slim 340, clocking in at 20mm at its thickest point, slightly bigger than the Air’s 19mm thickness.

So is there actually a market for these devices? Before the MacBook Air price drop, many considered its $2000+ price tag and its lack of features constituting a failure. Dell’s Adamo feels like a stunt, an attempt at winning the Guinness Book of World Records award for thinnest possible laptop. In this economy, it almost seems destined to fail outside of small, elite groups of consumers who are less interested in pinching pennies than they are flaunting sexy tech. Stay tuned for more details on the upcoming Adamo makeover, and keep an eye on how long it actually stays on the market.

## ’I’m Vertical. I’m Back,’ Says Apple’s Jobs

Apple co-founder Steve Jobs returned to the spotlight for the first time since having a liver transplant, overshadowing the unveiling of an iPod with a built-in video camera and several new iTunes features.

Jobs, who resumed work part-time in June after nearly six months of

medical leave, received a standing ovation from a packed auditorium as he took the stage in his first public appearance in nearly a year.

His dramatic return to center stage kicked off a music-themed product event that disappointed some industry observers who speculated Apple would announce that the songs of The Beatles would finally be available on iTunes.

The 54-year-old Apple chief executive, the visionary behind the Macintosh computer, the iPod and the iPhone, appeared gaunt but not dramatically more so than during his last public appearance in October 2008.

The notoriously private Jobs, who was wearing his trademark long-sleeved black shirt, jeans and sneakers, referred to his illness right off the bat.

"I’m vertical," he said. "I’m back at Apple, loving every day of it.

"I’m very happy to be here today with you all," he said. "About five months ago I had a liver transplant. So I now have the liver of a mid-20s person who died in a car crash and was generous enough to donate their organs.

"I hope all of us can be as generous and elect to be organ donors," said Jobs, who underwent an operation for pancreatic cancer five years ago.

Jobs also addressed his health in a rare interview following his on-stage performance, telling The New York Times he feels "great."

"I probably need to gain about 30 pounds, but I feel really good," he said. "I?m eating like crazy. A lot of ice cream."

Apple did not announce prior to the event at a San Francisco theater that Jobs would attend, and Silicon Valley technology blogs had been buzzing for days with rumors over whether or not he would show up.

Jobs’s appearance was the highlight of the event, during which Apple unveiled updates to iTunes, its online music store, the availability of 30,000 ringtones for sale for the iPhone, and a video camera-equipped iPod.

Jobs said the iPod Nano, Apple’s best-selling music player with over 100 million units sold, would now include a video camera, an FM radio, a pedometer and a microphone and speaker.

"You can watch your video on the Nano or sync it back to your computer," he said. "With one click you can send it to YouTube. Pretty amazing to always have a video camera of that quality in your pocket, built right into your Nano."

Jobs said there would be two models - an eight-gigabyte version for 149 dollars and a 16GB model for 179 dollars.

He said the updated iTunes store would feature iTunes LPs with liner notes, photos and other background information - just like record albums of the past.

"Some of us are old enough here that we actually bought LPs," he joked to a crowd made up predominantly of people under 35. "It was great. You

not only got great music, but you got great photography and great liner notes."

Jobs said Apple would be introducing ringtones for sale through the iPhone store at 1.29 dollars each.

Apple also announced it was cutting the prices on various iPod models, with the price of an 8GB iPod Touch, for example, dropping to 199 dollars from 249 dollars.

The event closed with a live performance by Grammy Award-winning singer Norah Jones.

But in a sign of who really was the star of the show, Jones got some of her biggest applause when Jobs kissed her on the cheek after she performed two songs.

## Carrier Pigeon Faster Than South-African Broadband

In an attempt to show just how slow South Africa’s Telkom broadband is, a frustrated IT company had a race to see which would be faster: transferring 4GB by sending a USB drive via pigeon 60 miles away, or transferring the files via the broadband connection. There were even rules in place so as to not have any unfair advantage over the broadband such as "birdseed must not have any performance-enhancing seeds within."

It was faster to send the data by pigeon than by broadband. It took the bird about an hour to reach the recipient station, and it took another hour to transfer the data to the other computer. The file being transferred via the broadband connection was still at 4%. Telkom said that it is not responsible for the firm’s slow Internet speed. Winston, the bird, is safely back in the IT office, probably enjoying birdseed without any performance-enhancing caplets mixed in.

## DOJ Scrutiny of Microsoft Deal Could Be Bad News For Yahoo

The Department of Justice has requested more information and details of the proposed arrangement between Microsoft and Yahoo. The scrutiny could spell disaster for Yahoo if the DOJ ultimately rejects the partnership.

The DOJ earlier nixed a proposed arrangement between Google and Yahoo back in mid-2008. Google pulled the plug upon learning that the DOJ planned to object to the partnership on antitrust grounds. Basically, the partnership would stifle competition and create an unbeatable search engine ad juggernaut.

The apprehension of the DOJ in that case seems warranted. Google has 75 percent of the search engine ad market by itself. That means Google alone sells three times more search engine ads than Microsoft and Yahoo combined. Obviously, if you combine Yahoo and Google together that balance tips further in Google’s favor.

The fact that the DOJ rejected the Google-Yahoo partnership probably plays into the more intense scrutiny in this case. Google and Microsoft

are both technology giants and fierce rivals. The DOJ can't appear to rubberstamp the Microsoft-Yahoo deal after rejecting the Google-Yahoo deal. The request for more information may be an extreme due diligence for the sake of appearances.

It wouldn't seem like the DOJ should have the same concerns though in this case. As I already noted, Microsoft and Yahoo combined only have 25 percent of the market. Its hard to see how the combined 25 percent would stifle competition or pose an antitrust threat to Google.

Besides, what is the alternative? Google, Microsoft, and Yahoo are the major players in this market, but Yahoo is a skeleton of its former self and seems ill-equipped to do battle with the larger rivals. Yahoo hasn't thrown in the towel and still considers itself a contender, but without this deal its entirely possible that Yahoo folds up its tent and fades away.

This arrangement may be the final lifeline Yahoo has (they already used 'phone a friend', right?). Without this life support the company could flatline.

Essentially, nixing the deal could be a death sentence for Yahoo which will yield the same competitive landscape as approving the deal. The one difference would be that Google and Microsoft would have to fight for the scraps left in Yahoo's void and Google would most likely be able to extend its dominance.

Looked at from that angle, rejecting the Microsoft-Yahoo deal could ultimately lead to the same result as having approved the Google-Yahoo deal.

Microsoft could still opt to buy Yahoo rather than forming a strategic alliance. But, if the DOJ ends up rejecting the partnership between the two, what are the odds it would approve the acquisition?

## Verdict Spares Microsoft $358M in Patent Damages

A federal appeals court said Friday that Microsoft Corp. does not have to pay Alcatel-Lucent $358 million for patent infringement because of problems with how the damages were calculated.

The disputed patent covers a method of entering information into fields on a computer screen without using a keyboard. Alcatel-Lucent says Microsoft's Outlook calendar and other programs illegally used this technology.

A U.S. District Court jury determined that damages should roughly equal what Microsoft would have paid up front to license the technology from Alcatel-Lucent. But Friday, the U.S. Appeals Court for the Federal Circuit said the telecommunications company didn't prove its technology was valuable enough to have merited $358 million in royalties.

The appeals court judges told a district court to reconsider the penalty.

Alcatel-Lucent spokeswoman Mary Ward said in an e-mail that the company was disappointed with the decision.

However, in the same ruling, the judges affirmed the underlying verdict against Microsoft, saying it was supported by substantial evidence.

Microsoft shares fell 14 cents to close at $24.86 Friday.
Alcatel-Lucent’s stock gained 18 cents, 4.6 percent, to close at $4.07.

This patent suit is the last of six stemming from claims that Lucent Technologies Inc. filed in 2003 against PC makers Gateway Inc. and Dell Inc. over technology developed by Bell Labs, Lucent’s research arm. Microsoft later joined the list of defendants.

France’s Alcatel bought Lucent in 2006.

## Hong Kong Named World’s Spam Capital

Hong Kong is under siege from legions of "zombies" attacking people with spam and leaving in their wake a trail of destruction costing millions of dollars a year, analysts have warned.

It sounds like the plot of a surrealist B-movie but it is the worrying scenario computer users are facing in a city which has been awarded the unenviable title of spam capital of the world.

The problem has taken a sinister new twist with the rise of so-called zombies -- computers infected by a virus that are sending reams of spam, or unsolicited emails, without their users’ knowledge.

There are an estimated 4,000 zombies active in Hong Kong and their criminal puppet masters use them to fire off thousands of messages offering products ranging from jewellery to pornography.

According to the 2008 Annual Security Report by Internet security firm MessageLabs 81.3 percent of emails sent to Hong Kong computer users last year were spam, more than in any other territory or country in the world.

And the problem is getting worse, with figures for August this year showing the spam rate in Hong Kong had risen to 93.4 percent.

"Nowhere is quite like Hong Kong. Location, history and inherent character combine to give it a special identity that sets it apart from anywhere else in the world," says Internet data analyst Dan Bleaken.

Bleaken believes the city?s status as a financial and commercial hub makes it a lucrative target for spammers.

"According to some estimates, spam-related activities cost Hong Kong 770 million dollars (5.5 billion HK dollars) in 2001, for example," he said.

Internet security firms say the money is lost primarily through the disruption caused to business by malicious software and viruses -- lost productivity through system downtime, slow system response times, technicians’ time, extra hardware and software.

Bleaken analysed data gathered by MessageLabs for a research paper entitled "Hong Kong and the Internet: Key Threats, Current Trends".

"Proximity to the rest of China -- a spammers? haven" is another root

cause of Hong Kong’s problems, Bleaken says in the report.

"Although the rest of China is the origin of only seven percent of global spam, it accounts for nearly 24 percent of the spam heading for Hong Kong."

Under the Unsolicited Electronic Messages Ordinance, which came into force here in December 2007, companies are required to provide an "unsubscribe" facility that requires no further correspondence within 10 days.

They also have to provide their name, a telephone number and postal address in messages, including a valid email address.

Companies breaching the rules face fines of up to one million dollars (128,000 US), although there have so far been no prosecutions.

Hong Kong’s Office of the Telecommunications Authority says it had received 13,055 reports of suspected contraventions up to the end of July and had sent out 89 warning letters.

But spam is an international problem and legislation can only be effective if countries work together on targeting the spammers, says Roy Ko, manager of the government-funded Hong Kong Computer Emergency Response Team Coordination Centre.

"These days we receive spam from around the world... They are being sent out from locations that haven’t implemented anti-spam laws. Unless we have a group effort on fighting spam we will keep receiving spam mails."

Part of the problem, say experts, is that the cyber criminals are often one step ahead of the legislators.

"Botnets" are the new weapon of choice in the remorselessly rising tide of spam. Short for "robot network" - these are networks of zombie computers that, unknown to their owners, have been taken over by a remote controller to undertake all kinds of skullduggery.

Highly professional gangs are responsible for a vast majority of online crime - now a burgeoning 100 million-US dollar global industry. Such gangs are a worldwide phenomenon and many operate from China, though not from Hong Kong itself.

"Botnets are fast becoming the air supply of the spammers," Paul Wood, a senior analyst at MessageLabs, told AFP.

"In 2008, botnets were responsible for as much as 90 percent of all spam." Wood estimates that there are around 4,000 zombie computers active in Hong Kong, around 40 times higher than would normally be expected for a region of around seven million people.

"This is due to the high concentration of computers in Hong Kong, which is itself a function of the region’s affluence and the substantial commercial presence there," he said.

Patrick Lee, a Hong Kong-based internet entrepreneur and co-founder of the Rotten Tomatoes film reviews website, advises people to filter out spam using the software that comes free with most internet email accounts.

But all of us already have access to the most effective weapon in the fight against spam, he says, and that is plain old common sense.

"If it looks shady don't click on anything," he said.

## Al-Qaida Web Sites Down Ahead of 9/11 Anniversary

A U.S.-based group monitoring militant Web sites said Friday that jihadist forums have been experiencing technical problems on the eve of Sept. 11, finally going offline a day before the 8th anniversary of the al-Qaida attack on the U.S.

The SITE Intelligence Group said the same thing happened last year, promoting consternation in militant circles.

"As happened last year ... top jihadist forums affiliated with al-Qaida began experiencing technical problems, culminating in their ultimate closure on September 10, 2009," the group said in a statement.

According to SITE, members of other jihadist forums expressed annoyance and "confusion" at the inability to access the Web sites and forums where they share updates and messages.

Since the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, al-Qaida has run sites on the Web that it has used to disseminate its messages.

The group over the years also has appeared to increasingly turn toward online forums, apparently so that it no longer had to rely on news stations to air video and audio messages.

Terror analysts have long seen al-Qaida's media arm as a powerful tool for rallying the network's followers and sympathizers, churning out videos and audiotapes even though the top leadership is mostly out of touch, hiding in the mountainous border regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The videos have grown in technical sophistication, featuring computer animations and clips from international television media.

The Arabic-language sites also have an extensive online following of would-be jihadis who discuss various topics, including the best ways to carry out attacks and which techniques are religiously permissible.

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